

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 SCA-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15

USIA-12 INSE-00 RSR-01 /088 W

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R 162359Z JUL 73

FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7022

C O N F I D E N T I A L MEXICO 5231

E.O. 11652:HQGDS

TAGS: CPRS/PBOR/SGEN/MX

SUBJECT: ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS: PUBLICITY ON USE OF  
ELECTRONIC SENSORS

REF: MEXICO 5179; MEXICO 5213

1. SUMMARY: DESPITE REASSURANCES BY FOREIGN SECRETARY  
RABASA THAT USG NOT PLANNING TO CONSTRUCT FRONTIER-LONG  
FENCE, ISSUE REVIVED JULY 15 WITH WIDE PUBLICITY GIVEN TO  
NEW YORK TIMES ARTICLE WRITTEN BY DAVID ANDELMAN.  
FON SECRETARY RABASA RAISED SUBJECT WITH AMBASSADOR ON  
JULY 16 (MEXICO 5213).

2. JULY 14 MEXICO CITY PRESS GENERALLY REPORTED THAT  
AFTER CONVERSATIONS WITH ACTING SECRETARY RUSH AND  
DR. KISSINGER, FON SECRETARY RABASA HAD DENIED  
THAT USG WAS PLANNING TO CONSTRUCT FENCE ALONG ENTIRE  
FRONTIER (REFTEL).

3. JULY 15 PRESS UNIVERSALLY GAVE FRONT-PAGE COVERAGE  
TO STORIES BASED ON DAVID ANDELMAN'S NEW YORK TIMES  
ARTICLE IN WHICH HE ALLEGED THAT "US IMPLANTING ELECTRONIC  
FENCE TO SHUT MEXICAN BORDER TO SMUGGLING". ALTHOUGH  
SEVERAL PAPERS RESTRICTED THEMSELVES TO AFP RELEASE ON  
ANDELMAN'S STORY, EXCELSIOR BANNER-LINED "US INSTALLS  
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FRONTIER 'ELECTRONIC WALL', AS IN VIETNAM"; ACCOUNT

WAS A FULL TRANSLATION OF ANDELMAN ARTICLE.

4. EDITORIALS APPEARED IN JULY 16 EXCELSIOR AND EL DIA. EXCELSIOR'S COMMENT WAS SOBER AND REASONED IN TONE. AFTER TERMING REPORT OF PLANS FOR FENCE ALONG ENTIRE FRONTIER AS "OMINOUS", EDITORIALIST TOOK NOTE OF SUBSEQUENT STORY ABOUT USE OF ELECTRONIC DEVICES. HE THEN STATED "WHO CAN DOUBT RIGHT OF US TO MAKE SAFE ITS FRONTIERS FROM TRESPASSING OF UNDESIRABLE HUMANS? NO ONE. MOREOVER, THAT GOVERNMENT HAS OBLIGATION TO DO SO UTILIZING LICIT MECHANISMS WHICH TECHNOLOGY AVAILS...WITHOUT IN THE LEAST PREJUDICING LEGITIMATE US INTERESTS, CARE SHOULD ALSO BE TAKEN NOT TO CLOSE ITS FRONTIERS TO HEALTHY COMMUNICATION WITH ITS NEIGHBORS...DENIALS OF UNDER SECRETARY OF FOREIGN RELATIONS RUBEN GONZALEZ SOSA, (PUBLISHED ON PAGE 17 OF SAME EDITION OF EXCELSIOR) ARE NOT ENOUGH TO NEGATE EXISTENCE OF ELECTRONIC DETECTION SINCE ESTABLISHMENT OF SUCH SYSTEM IS UNDER US DOMAIN. IN US, THERE HAS BEEN NO DENIAL OF THE NEW YORK TIMES INFORMATION."

5. EL DIA EDITORIAL SURMISED THAT "SOMETHING SERIOUS MUST HAVE HAPPENED TO THE TRADITIONAL SITUATION ON THE FRONTIER WHEN WE LEARN THAT US IS ESTABLISHING AN ELECTRONIC CURTAIN ALONG ENTIRE EXTENT OF ITS SOUTHERN FRONTIER". EDITORIAL HYPOTHEZIZES THAT MOVEMENT OF ILLEGALS ACROSS FRONTIER CONTINUES NOT BECAUSE IT IS DIFFICULT TO DETECT BUT BECAUSE OF DESIRE ON PART OF US EMPLOYERS FOR CHAQP MEXICAN LABOR. EDITORIAL ENDS ON A SOUR NOTE, STATING "IF IT CAN BE SAID THAT EVERYONE IS FREE TO FENCE OFF HIS OWN HOME, IT ALSO SHOULD BE MADE VERY CLEAR: WE ARE NOT THE ONES WHO HAVE A POLICED FRONTIER...AND THIS, CERTAINLY, OBLIGES CONSIDERATION AND RECIPROCITY".

6. COMMENT: EMBASSY UNDERSTANDS THAT EXTENT OF EXISTING FENCE IS ABOUT 11.5 MILES IN TOTO, (4 MILES AT SAN ISIDRO, 5.6 MILES AT CALEXICO AND 1.9 MILES AT EL PASO.) WE ALSO ARE AWARE OF THE FACT THAT ELECTRONIC SENSORS, INCLUDING SOME WHICH MAY HAVE BEEN USED IN CONFIDENTIAL

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VIETNAM, ARE BEING USED BY BORDER PATROL ,(AND POSSIBLY BY CUSTOMS) ON AN EXPERIMENTAL BASIS. FULL EXTENT OF THIS ACTIVITY UNDOUBTEDLY WILL BE BROUGHT OUT DURING PRESENT DISCUSSIONS IN WASHINGTON. HOWEVER, FOR OUR INFORMATION, WE WOULD APPRECIATE RECEIPT OF DETAILS OF THESE MEASURES.

6. WHOLE QUESTION OF MEASURES TO CONTROL FLOW OF

GOODS AND PEOPLE ACROSS COMMON FRONTIER IS CONTROVERSIAL UNDER BEST OF CIRCUMSTANCES. THOSE IN QUESTION HAVE BROUGHT OUT EMOTIONAL REACTIONS CONCERNING PARALLELISMS WITH BERLIN WALL AND VIETNAM. UNILATERAL NATURE OF ACTIONS IS ALSO STRESSED IN ALL ARTICLES AND COMMENTARIES. IN ORDER TO CONTAIN NEGATIVE IMPACT OF THESE STORIES, EMBASSY RECOMMENDS THAT EFFORT BE MADE JOINTLY WITH GOM TO PLACE MATTER IN PERSPECTIVE. WHILE POINTING OUT THAT SOME CRIMINAL ELEMENTS ABUSE OPEN BORDER AND CONSEQUENTLY THAT MEASURES MUST BE TAKEN BY BOTH COUNTRIES TO COUNTERACT SUCH ACTIVITY, THE NORM IS THE LONG OPEN BORDER WITH UNIMPEDED MOVEMENT OF GOODS AND PERSONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES.

7. IF QUERIED BY PRESS, EMBASSY WILL SAY IT IS SEEKING ACCURATE INFORMATION FROM WASHINGTON. IF PRESSED FURTHER, WE WILL STATE THAT ALTHOUGH SOME ELECTRONIC SENSING DEVICES ARE BEING TRIED OUT, THEY ARE FOR DETECTION OF CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES ONLY. LEGITIMATE TRAFFIC IS NOT AFFECTED IN ANY WAY.  
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